



## One Year in a Pandemic - Challenges to Inclusive Education and Lessons Learnt

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### SESSION 1

Current challenges to inclusive education and wellbeing of key stakeholders in education

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### Redefining the entitlement for support in the Slovak educational system

One of the challenges Slovakia's educational system faces is the low level of inclusive education and low quality of support for children with disabilities and children from a disadvantaged socio-economic background. The current Ministry of Education acknowledges this challenge and intends to propose a complex reform strengthening the inclusiveness of the educational system in Slovakia. The goal of the reform is to redesign the overall system of providing support to children and pupils with diverse educational needs.

The current definition of children and pupils with special educational needs is based on their diagnoses (their disability, their low socio-economic background or their talent). The new focus is on the mechanisms of support for all children based on their needs. For example, currently a school receives extra finances when educating a child with disability. However, the entitlement for the extra finances does not take into account, whether the school is already barrier-free and if not, how much the real costs for construction work would be. Moreover, the school is not confined by any Law, how to use the extra finances. In the new

system, the extra-funding should be set according to the real costs of barrier-free education for that particular child.

Also the current system does not ensure any support for a child with difficulties in school, unless the child has been officially diagnosed with an official learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia). If the pupil faces difficulties in Slovak language class because s/he has a different mother tongue, although s/he is a Slovak citizen, currently s/he is not entitled to any additional support. In the new system, a child with a different mother tongue and language barrier would be entitled for extra language classes and/or tutoring. To achieve this goal, the National Institute for Education is working on a new model of support measures in education. The paper will be presented by representatives of the National Institute for Education and will address current challenges and dilemmas they face while preparing these changes and relevant legislation.

◦ **Zuzana Labašová**

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**Pupils, colleagues, parents, society - what triggered discomfort and anxiety in teachers during the pandemic year?**

The school year of 2020/2021 was for many pupils in Slovakia a year of closed schools. For many teachers it was also a year when their teaching style became absolutely obsolete and distance education required them to rethink and recreate their teaching. The professional challenges they faced, the change of routine, lack of contact with their colleagues and pupils, the conflicts they had to face and the perception of their profession in society took a toll on their psychological wellbeing. How serious are these deleterious effects and what are the consequences?

Komensky Institute, together with the Centre of educational analyses and Focus agency decided to find out the answers in a representative survey among teachers of elementary and high schools across the county in June 2021. The results of the research uncovered a significant amount of exhaustion, frustration and feelings of isolation among teachers that is alarming: 77% of the respondents feel extremely exhausted, 21% do not enjoy teaching anymore and almost 18% of the teachers seriously consider finding a different job instead of teaching. As the psychological wellbeing of teachers is crucial for their long term satisfaction and is directly connected to the quality of their teaching, we need to ask the question: How can we help teachers increase their level of satisfaction at work? The answers we received gave us a clearer idea of effective tools and strategies to empower and support our pedagogical workers who model and shape the new generation.

Further reading: <https://komenskehoinstitut.sk/prieskum-2021/>

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**The impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the well-being of pupils and teachers in the Czech Republic**

The pandemics resulted in months of school closures. The situation was completely new and challenging for both pupils and teachers with varying and often limited support from schools, families, and the state. It might therefore affect their well-being and motivation. In this study,

we investigate the potential impacts on pupils and teachers using a representative sample of Czech pupils (N=2243) and Czech teachers (N=603). International studies covering the pre-pandemic state of things are utilized as a reference point to identify the potential impacts of school closures and anti-pandemic restrictions. We detect a significant drop in the well-being of pupils and teachers due to the pandemics and school closures. Compared to pre-pandemic time, pupils feel low significantly more often. Moreover, there is a strong connection between poor well-being and struggle to catch up with curriculum as well as with the general attitude toward school. One-third of teachers manifest symptoms of depression and anxiety (based on the PHQ-8 index). They also report significantly more often than before the pandemics that sources of stress are: having too much lesson preparation and being held responsible for the results of students.

Keywords: well-being, PHQ-8 index, online schooling, covid-19

Further reading: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WcyFIXqQFDEEZI1hXn\\_pRAb7xGdpJVIF/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WcyFIXqQFDEEZI1hXn_pRAb7xGdpJVIF/view)

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### **Support of wellbeing at Czech elementary schools**

Pandemic as well as restriction measures had significant negative impact on wellbeing and mental health of students as well as teachers. Therefore system approach to support of wellbeing in education is one of the key tasks in following years. Gathered data on Czech education system reveal that situation regarding wellbeing at school had not been satisfying even before the pandemics. According to PISA (2015, 2018) 30% of Czech pupils are either directly or indirectly affected by bullying. 7% of Czech pupils feel sad and 18% are not satisfied with their life. The Czech Republic is among 5 countries with the lowest proportion of pupils who perceive the clear meaning of their lives within OECD. TIMSS (2015, 2019) findings show that Czech 4th grade primary school pupils attend school the least like of all OECD countries. Czech four-graders also repeatedly report the lowest degree of belonging school.

Support of wellbeing in education is also one of the goals set in Strategy of Education Policy in the Czech Republic 2030+. Project Partnership for Education 2030+ was established to support implementation of the Strategy 2030+. Project expert group focused on system support of wellbeing in cooperation with STEM Institute for Empirical Research conducted survey focused on opinions of elementary schools' headmasters (N= 393) on wellbeing in education and current practice of their school in its support. A quarter of the respondents declared an idea of what is wellbeing, of which 5% stated that they have a clear idea. Half of the headmasters did not hear about this concept. After clarifying the concept, majority of respondents consider wellbeing to be important for education outcomes.

Key words: wellbeing, elementary schools, headmasters, system support



## SESSION 2

### Inclusive education in a broader perspective

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#### **Barriers to inclusive education during a pandemic from the perspective of international law**

Children with disabilities in the Czech Republic are still waiting for a full recognition of their right to inclusive education. Both legislative and factual barriers continue to make it hard for them to access mainstream education, to prosper among their peers and to enjoy learning with adequate support, free from harassment or bullying. While these barriers were present in the system before COVID-19 began to spread, the pandemic revealed just how much and how often children with disabilities are forgotten by the education system. Inclusive education exposes that the education systems often wrongly assume that all pupils have similar needs. The pandemic response, however, often manifested the same problem: the ignorance of the impact on children with disabilities and their families. In this article, we aim to examine these pandemic-related barriers for children with disabilities in access to education and learn from the mistakes made. We provide an overview of international legal standards which should guide the pandemic response. In the end, we propose alternatives to the measures adopted which can inspire future pandemic response.

Key words: inclusive education, law, human rights, non-discrimination, human rights in emergency

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#### **Decolonial pedagogical practices and inclusive education - an intrinsically connected path**

Although decolonial studies are still unknown by the majority of people both in academical and non-academical settings, one can find many decolonial postures and practices in daily Inclusive Education. It is important to highlight that Inclusive Education is about a change in educational postures and practices, providing an environment where all students are included. The students may be from different backgrounds, may have different ways to perceive and deal with school knowledge or may have different educational demands. In any of those scenarios, students need to be active in the educational process. If students are perceived as less able because of gender, race, economic backgrounds or psychopedagogical diagnoses, the education is not inclusive. Consequently, we can understand that Inclusive Education demands a Decolonial Practice because it requires the overcome of an epistemological perspective. Inclusive Education will only truly happen if new knowledge producers and new knowledge possibilities are recognized. In Brazil, Countryside Education has a specific Teacher Education course. The students are land

workers and would not have the possibility to attend a regular course. Instead, they live at the Campus for 40 days a semester and have condensed courses. Back to their communities, they have teaching practice and produce course essays. Countryside Teacher Education Course is considered to be an inclusive practice because it is organized for the students. This organization goes beyond the course time frame, with content and teaching approaches that consider their knowledge and experiences. The knowledge students have, both from own experience and from generational knowledge are regarded during classes and at the academic materials. Additionally, student's younger children can attend a self-organized childcare or be welcomed to be in classrooms. The presence and knowledge of workers and mothers should be possible and assured in all educational settings, promoting a new and decolonial education.

Keywords: inclusive education, decolonialism, epistemological change, decolonial pedagogical practices, countryside education, inclusion, epistemological shift

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### **Future English teachers' experience with online applications and web pages**

The contribution presents the findings of the qualitative part of research focused on how future teachers of English have been approaching online technologies throughout their lives, primarily for the sake of informal education. In semi-structured interviews, teacher candidates who study primary and lower-secondary education at the Faculty of Education of Palacký University in Olomouc shared their history of using online applications and web pages from their young school age up to the present time. Differences and similarities between the two groups of students are explored, as well as the potential influence of their specific histories with online technologies on how they plan to utilize these in their future careers. The research was financed as a part of the student project IGA\_Pdf\_2021\_021 The phenomenon of informal learning with a focus on online technologies for future English language teachers at Palacký University in Olomouc.

Key words: future English teachers, online applications, webpages, informal learning, qualitative research

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### **Multimedia advocacy for teaching and learning**



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